LITERACY B.C. NEWSLETTER

This is our first newsletter as the new provincial literacy organization resulting from the merger of Literacy B.C. and the Adult Literacy Contact Centre (ALCC). We're delighted to report that the merger has been completed and we're now happily together under one roof!

You can reach us at:

Suite 622 - 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6B 1L8
Phone: 684-0624 (Lower Mainland)
1-800-663-1293 (Toll-free in B.C.)
Fax: 684-8520

Some of the services we'll provide for learners, practitioners, and the general public are:

❖ A 1-800 help line.

❖ A resource centre for information on programs and resource materials.

❖ A professional development program.

❖ A regional development and support program to provide outreach and consultation.

❖ A public awareness program.

❖ A membership services program that includes publication of a bi-monthly newsletter and the development of regional coordination/networks.

Our staff consists of:

Linda Mitchell, Executive Director
Mary Thompson Boyd, Coordinator of Training & Regional Development
Sandy Middleton, Information Officer
Marj Froemgen, Administrative Assistant

We regret to announce the departure from our staff of Linda Hackett as of June 30. Linda, who was Coordinator of the ALCC since August 1989, has resigned to complete her master's degree at the University of Victoria.

As ALCC Coordinator, Linda served the public and the literacy field with extraordinary integrity, sensitivity, and dedication. She brought theoretical expertise, incomparable managerial skills, a standard of excellence, and a deep commitment to literacy to her work. We will miss her valuable contribution and wish her every success in the future. ❐

Study asks: Does ABE make a difference?

The ABE Student Outcomes Project recently released its report of a pilot study which asked: who enrolls in college ABE programs in B.C.; why do they enroll; and what difference does ABE make to their lives?

The ABE Student Outcomes Study was initiated in 1991 to obtain information which can lead to improvements in the ability of ABE programs to meet student needs. After a two year process to design the study, a pilot project was undertaken in September 1993 to collect data from students at three B.C. community colleges. The pilot project was also used to test project procedures and instruments for province-wide implementation of the study during the 1994/95 and 1995/96 academic years.

The purpose of the study is to collect clear, consistent, reliable information about the educational, social, and economic outcomes for students in college ABE programs. Data from the study will be used to identify strengths and weaknesses of ABE programs as perceived by students, and provide information leading to improvements in ABE curriculum.

The report of the 1993/94 pilot phase of the study - the B.C. ABE Student Outcomes Report - contains data collected from 556 new ABE students at Capilano College, Okanagan University College, and Selkirk College. Information was collected from the pilot study sample over thirteen months from September 1993 to October 1994. The study used phone interviews and written surveys to monitor the progress of students while they were enrolled in an ABE program and after they had moved on to other activities.

"Continuants" - students who were still in ABE after six months - were surveyed three times: upon entry, after six months, and after 13 months. "Leavers" - students who left the program prior to six months - were surveyed separately.

Some themes from the pilot study are:

❖ The number of ABE students with dependents is less than has traditionally been assumed. Only 35% of the pilot study sample had dependents - 26% of women and 9% of men.

❖ Students enrolled in ABE with specific educational and often occupational goals. The largest group enrolled because they wanted to upgrade their skills in English, maths, and sciences in order to gain access to university level courses and career programs.

❖ Leavers emphasized different goals from the total survey sample and said that upgrading of existing skills was their main reason for entering ABE.

❖ Students progressed through the levels of ABE and moved on to other university and college courses. Over 60% of continuants had completed one level and were working at a different level of ABE after six months. One-half of leavers had completed all or some of their ABE courses and one-third had continued their studies in other programs.

❖ Many students reported financial difficulties and the pressure of juggling work, family responsibilities, and study. For example, 55% of leavers were employed while taking ABE courses and over half of these students worked more than 30 hours a week.

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❖ Participation in ABE increased the number of students who were employed. However, only 10% of students felt that their expectations of improving their financial position had been fulfilled.

❖ After 13 months, 34% of students holding jobs planned to change their occupations, and 42% hoped to complete university courses, take more career training or own their own business.

❖ There is a connection between use of college services and ABE student success. Continuants reported greater knowledge and use of student services than leavers.

These and other themes will be explored in greater depth during the next phase of the study, which began in September 1994 and involves 2100 students at 12 institutions. Publication of these results is planned for March 1996.

For a copy of the pilot project report contact:

The Advanced Education Council
Suite 950 - 409 Granville Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6C 1T2

Phone: 895-5080
Fax: 895-5088 ❐

Children to fly on "Flights of Fancy" this summer

This summer, public libraries across B.C. will take children on "Flights of Fancy" through their annual Summer Reading Club. The Club is aimed at encouraging school-aged children to keep reading throughout the summer.

The Club is sponsored by the British Columbia Library Association with the support of the Library Services Branch, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, and public libraries. Public libraries will be planning special events throughout the summer to promote the Club, which reaches 50,000 children every year in B.C.

Bookmarks, reading records, stickers, and pogs - decorated with dragons to reflect this year's theme - will be available to children to keep track of the books they read this summer. Most libraries will also offer special programs and incentives for members to read and to visit the public library regularly.

For further information contact your local public library or:

Sandra Lee
Richmond Public Library
#100 - 7700 Minoru Gate
V6Y 1R9

Phone: 278-9811 ext. 619
Fax: 273-0459
Email:sandral@rpl.richmond.bc.ca

SPECIAL EVENTS

Play A Round for Literacy!

Peter Gzowski Invitational Golf Tournament
Friday, August 25, 1995
University Golf Club, Vancouver

Meet Peter Mansbridge and Cynthia Dale at Vancouver's fifth annual PGI!

Peter Mansbridge, anchor of CBC TV's The National, will host this year's event with Cynthia Dale, former star of CBC TV's Street Legal, as special guest.

The 1995 PGI will be as much fun as always with music, special on-course activities, and lots of great prizes - for duffers and serious golfers!

The tournament fee is $175 which includes a golf gift, prizes, lunch, and dinner. Tax receipts will be issued and all proceeds will benefit Literacy B.C.

For more information call Literacy B.C. at 1-800-663-1293.

TAKE 5 AND READ!

International Literacy Day, September 8, 1995!

The TAKE 5 AND READ special promotion is planned for September 8, 1995, International Literacy Day!

The B.C. and Yukon Community Newspapers Association has joined the TAKE 5 AND READ partnership this year. Talk to your local community newspaper about what it can do to promote TAKE 5 AND READ on September 8.

Once again, Literacy B.C. will be providing International Literacy Day kits which will help you promote literacy in your community. The kit will include TAKE 5 AND READ posters and bookmarks, ideas for special events, and other useful information. Kits will be mailed mid-August.

For more information, call Literacy B.C. at 1-800-663-1293.

Literacy B.C.'s 1995 Annual General Meeting and Conference will take place October 28 in Vancouver. We hope you'll join us for an exciting forum on the future of literacy.

Look for more information about the conference in our next newsletter.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Literacy Corps Program

One million dollars has been allocated to the Literacy Corps Program to fund programs targeted at youth who are 15 years of age and out of school.

The Literacy Corps Program is funded by the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada.

Activities to be funded include:

- learning materials intended for youth
- public awareness activities related to youth literacy issues
- research into youth literacy questions
- coordination and information sharing
- access and outreach for groups who have traditionally had difficulty accessing literacy services for youth
- the development of national projects for youth

The deadline for applications is July 22, 1995.

For further information and an application form, contact:

Literacy Corps
National Literacy Secretariat
Human Resources Development Canada
15 Eddy Street
Hull, Quebec
K1A 1K5

Phone: (819) 953-5280

Fax: (819) 953-8076

Literacy Materials Bulletin Spring 1995

The spring 1995 issue of the *Literacy Materials Bulletin* contains reviews of a variety of recommended materials including: a new series of easy-to-read mystery novels; a handbook for instructors of students being treated for mental disorders; a manual on plain language writing; anthologies of popular fiction and nonfiction; and a Canadian content reader/workbook. Copies of the current *Bulletin*, as well as the previous ten issues, are available from Literacy B.C. Materials recommended in the *Bulletin* are available on loan from Literacy B.C. Call 1-800-663-1293.

Libraries and Literacy Summit '94 Final Report with Strategy and Recommendations

This is a 29-page report of the Libraries and Literacy Summit, held in Vancouver in July 1994, and sponsored by the B.C. Library Association Literacy Interest Group. The report lists recommendations proposed at the Summit to develop a long-term strategy for literacy services in public libraries in B.C. Copies of the report are available from Literacy B.C.
Call 1-800-663-1293.

CONFERENCES / TRAINING

Beyond Words: The Power of Inclusion

This national conference will focus on literacy for adults with intellectual disabilities. Sponsored by the Canadian Association for Community Living and the Roehr Institute, the conference will feature models of Canadian literacy programs that have a strong philosophical commitment to the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities.

For information on the conference, contact:

Association for Community Living - Manitoba
#1 - 90 Market Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 0P3

Phone: (204) 947-1118
Fax: (204) 949-1464

Making Workplace Education Work

This conference will take place in Saskatoon, September 29 - 30, 1995. The conference will increase awareness of the importance of workplace education and the need for it in Saskatchewan.

For further information, contact:

Saskatchewan Literacy Network
P.O. Box 1520
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7K 3R5
Phone: (306) 653-7368
Fax: (306) 933-6490

Professional Development Opportunities for Practitioners

There is still room to register in courses being offered this summer at the University of Victoria and the University College of the Fraser Valley.

University of Victoria:

Advising and Counselling the Adult Learner, July 4 - 14, 1995

Women in Adult Education, August 8 - 18, 1995

These courses can be applied as credit towards the Certificate in Adult and Continuing Education Program. For information, contact:

Continuing Studies in Education
University of Victoria
Phone: 721-6571
Fax: 721-6603

University College of the Fraser Valley (UCFV):

Introduction to Adult Education, July 17 - 28, 1995

This course can be applied as credit towards the B.A. in Adult Education offered by UCFV and the Open University.

For further information, contact:

Department of Adult Education
University College of the Fraser

Phone: 864-4621
Fax: 855-7618

Rural Communities to Ride the Information Highway

A project to link rural communities to the Information Highway is accepting applications from schools and libraries across Canada to establish community access sites to the Internet.

The Schoolnet Community Access Project is managed by Industry Canada and Human Resources Development Canada.

The project will raise awareness about the Internet's potential for creating jobs and growth and provide Internet training facilities for local entrepreneurs, employers, educators, students and others interested in improving their information management and networking skills.

Communities will be selected to establish and operate public access sites in low cost public locations, such as schools and libraries, to serve as Internet "on ramps." The aim of the project is to establish up to 300 centres across Canada annually for three years.

Canadian not-for-profit organizations such as educational institutions, public libraries, community centres and community freenets, as well as municipal and territorial governments, may submit proposals on behalf of their community.

Project proposals must be submitted to Industry Canada by October 31, 1995. For more information contact:

Industry Canada
Phone: 1-800-268-6608
E-mail: comacess@istc.ca ❐

Literacy and New Technologies

The use of technology in literacy instruction, and the possible applications of new information and communication technologies to the literacy field in B.C., were the focus of an event hosted by the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour in Richmond, June 1-2.

Thirty participants from around B.C. initiated a dialogue on "Literacy and New Technologies." A report will be available later this summer of the issues, concerns, and ideas for possible next steps put forward at the event. Look for more information on this issue in future newsletters. ❐

Message to our Readers

This edition of the newsletter is being sent to the combined readership of the Literacy B.C. and ALCC newsletters. We encourage those of you who are not yet members of Literacy B.C. to complete the membership form inserted in this newsletter. We hope you'll send us your membership fee so we can continue to send you the newsletter.

Foundation Skills Project

The Foundation Skills Project (FSP) encourages business and labour to take greater responsibility for the basic skills upgrading of their workforces and is building a higher profile for the emerging expertise in foundational skills training. Most importantly, the FSP promotes the initiation of actual workforce basic skills upgrading programs in the private sector.

Hosted by 23 local Chambers of Commerce in B.C. and the Yukon, the FSP is delivering 90-minute seminars for businesses, union representatives, and other community stakeholders. Investing in the Future: New Workforce Skills, consists of a seven minute video overview and a slide-supported workshop. The seminar focusses on how to identify the need for workforce basic skills upgrading in any organization; how to assess the impact or "bottom line" consequences of low literacy or numeracy levels; and how to overcome the common barriers to implementing a workforce basic skills upgrading program.

The presentations are free of charge. All participants receive a complimentary information package and have an opportunity to meet with local workforce literacy practitioners. Additional support through followup calls and consultations is provided to those who are interested in implementing workforce training initiatives.

The FSP models the very partnership approach that is critical to addressing workforce literacy issues. With an advisory committee that reflects business, government, labour, and educator interests, the project is funded by the National Literacy Secretariat and managed by a Workforce Training Consortium consisting of the B.C. Chamber of Commerce, SkillPlan, Literacy B.C., and the Open Learning Agency.

To date, seminars have been held in Kelowna, Prince George, Quesnel and Williams Lake. The next seminars are scheduled as follows:

September: Whitehorse, Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, Chetwynd
October: Prince Rupert, Victoria, Langley/Surrey
November: Burnaby/New Westminster, Cranbrook

For more information, call 1-800-663-1293. ❐

WHO WE ARE

Literacy B.C., founded in March 1990, is a coalition of people and groups concerned with promoting literacy in B.C.

Our mission is to promote literacy, to support literacy learners, to develop community partnerships and to present a united voice on literacy. We are supported by the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada, the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour, memberships, and donations.

Literacy B.C. welcomes your news and comments. Send to:

Literacy B.C.
622 - 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6B 1L8
Phone: 1-800-663-1293
Fax: (604) 684-8520

Donations to Literacy B.C. are tax deductible.